DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 260 293 CE 042 314

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TITLE Working Partnerships: A Joint Venture in Vocational Education.
PUB DATE 22 Aug 85
NOTE 23p.; Presented at the Industry-Government-Education Partnership Conference for Economic and Business Development (Nashville, TN, August 22, 1985).
PUB TYPE Reports - Descriptive (141) -- Speeches/Conference Papers (150)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS Business Responsibility; Cooperative Education; *Cooperative Programs; *Demonstration Programs; Educational Benefits; Educational Needs; Educational Planning; *Education Work Relationship; Institutional Cooperation; Program Implementation; *School Business Relationship; School Role; Secondary Education; *Vocational Education
IDENTIFIERS *Joint Ventures in Vocational Education

ABSTRACT

Joint Ventures in Vocational Education projects link participating businesses with secondary vocational programs in a cooperative relationship. These are voluntary arrangements between vocational programs and a public or private sector agency that combine the energies and resources of the partners to enrich various aspects of the vocational education process. Joint Ventures are one of the best ways to encourage greater business and community involvement in support of public vocational education. Joint Ventures are especially attractive because of their simplicity and flexibility. Individual vocational programs and their partners can develop activities at their own pace. Types of partnership activities vary; they may include classes for students at business sites, joint development of curriculum, summer job programs for youth, career education and exploration, school staff internships, mini-grants to supplement school programs, field trips, shop or classroom speakers, tutoring assistance, and loaned executives. Joint Ventures foster special bonds of cooperation and mutual respect between schools and the communities they serve. Both partners can benefit greatly. (Appendixes to this paper answer questions about Joint Ventures, provide an example of a brochure concerning Joint Ventures, and describe projects that have been conducted similar to Joint Ventures.) (KC)

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Industry-Government-Education Partnership Conference
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WORKING PARTNERSHIPS:A JOINT VENTURE IN VOCATIONAL EDUCATION

Introduction

Joint Ventures in Vocational Education link participating businesses with secondary vocational programs in a cooperative relationship. These are voluntary arrangements between vocational programs and a public or private sector agency that combine the energies and resources of the partners to enrich various aspects of the vocational education process.

Joint Ventures - often referred to as partnerships or adopt-a-school programs - are one of the best ways to encourage greater business and community involvement in support of public vocational education. Other ways of

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sparking involvement include: (1) a program of small grants to vocational instructors for carrying out innovative projects with their students, (2) the establishment of independent supportive education funds, and (3) sponsorship of community seminars on educational issues.

Joint Ventures are especially attractive because of their simplicity and flexibility. Individual vocational programs and their public or private sector partner can develop activities at their own pace, consistent with their interests, needs, and resources. One-to-one pairing enables businesses to support improvements in public vocational education in a concrete and manageable way. Corporations, industries, retail stores, government agencies, community organizations, service clubs, unions and trade/agricultural associations can all be effective community partners.[1]

Types of partnership activities vary depending on partnership interests, needs, and resources - and may be short or long term. Examples include, but are not limited to, the following: (a) classes for students at business sites, (b) joint development of curriculum reflecting current technology and practices, (c) summer job programs for youth, (d) career education and exploration, (e) school

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[1]The terms business and industry are most frequently used because business or industrial-vocational program pairings serve as the basis for many joint ventures. The word "business" is used to mean any of the various public or private sector community partners.

staff internships, (f) mini-grants to supplement school programs, (g) field trips, (h) shop or classroom speakers, (i) tutoring assistance, (j) job readiness, career opportunity and work attitudes seminars, and (k) executives-on-loan to assist management operations. These are just a few of the many activities that community partners and vocational school programs can undertake together. Through the cumulative effect of such cooperative efforts, a joint venture can improve the educational environment at a school. The program as a whole may then serve as the basis for expanded community/school cooperation across all educational programs.

Each business/vocational program pair develops its own range of cooperative projects - some on a small scale, some more extensive. These activities, however, should be seen not as one-time efforts, but as part of an on-going cooperative relationship. Mature partnerships seek to emphasize staff, curriculum and student development initiatives, rather than token involvement limited to requests for and contributions of money.

Joint Ventures foster special bonds of cooperation and mutual respect between schools and the communities they serve. They are the means by which vocational programs can benefit from local resources and talents. Ultimately, joint ventures serve the interests of students, the schools, the business community, non-profit organizations and the community as a whole.

Benefits of a Joint Venture

What joint ventures can offer varies widely, and might include:

FOR THE VOCATIONAL PROGRAM

* A broadened base of support for vocational education.

* Guidance and assistance in developing vocational skills needed for employment.

* Part-time cooperative work experience for students as a capstone learning event.

* Technical upgrading and updating for vocational teachers through personnel exchange programs, work experiences, participation in company training programs, attendance at seminars and/or workshops and expert assistance in the school shop.

* Assistance in updating and upgrading vocational programs, equipment and facilities.

* Volunteer examiners for performance testing.

* An opportunity to bring the "outside world of work" to students.

FOR THE PRIVATE OR PUBLIC SECTOR PARTNER

* An expanded view of the needs of vocational education within the community and an opportunity to contribute directly to their vocational programs.

* Programmatic changes consistent with employer expectations.

* Long-term improvements in the work-readiness and productivity of qualified entry level workers.

* An improved climate for business through a vital and healthy vocational education system.

* Supplemental training for workers in reading, writing, science, mathematics, reasoning, speaking, listening, and manual skills.

* Enhanced visibility and recognition for valued public service.

FOR THE GENERAL PUBLIC

* Improved understanding between and among key elements of the community.

* Stimulation for other cooperative efforts within the community.

* Realization of the impact the life of the community has on the quality of the public schools.

* Voluntary staff and student labor on community projects.

* Increased involvement in youth activities/clubs.

The Vocational School Perspective

A joint venture can provide many benefits for a school, but most importantly, it serves as a mechanism for bringing the "outside world" directly into contact with directors, instructors and the students themselves. This outside contact means a broader audience for positive school efforts, an exchange of new ideas, a better understanding of other viewpoints and the chance to be better understood. It can also offer contacts to draw on in meeting future needs

and an opportunity to make the vocational education process more relevant and accountable to community employers.

For vocational, as well as other students, outside contacts can lead to increased motivation to stay in school and greater awareness of work-world opportunities and expectations.

The need for community contact and support is important for school districts, as well as for individual schools. Most public school systems directly serve only a small percentage of the households in their respective communities. A joint venture program can have the most impact as part of a larger strategy for reducing the isolation of the schools from the broader community and for increasing public awareness of what the school system has to offer.

The Business/Community Perspective

"Outside contact" is an important part of what businesses gain from partnerships as well. Businesses can become isolated too - so a broader vision on the part of employees can be a real asset, particularly as businesses are expected to be more and more sensitive to the views of the larger community. They also recognize that public schools determine, in large measure, the quality of future employees.

Most significant for business, however, is the link between the public schools and the vitality of a community or region. Declining schools can mean a declining

community. But good schools help make a region an attractive and economically healthy place to live.

Starting Your Program

Three elements are necessary to get a joint venture started: (1) the endorsement of school district officials and the board of education, (2) support from business and industry, as well as community leaders, and (3) some source of expertise and momentum to keep the effort moving forward.

APPENDIX A

A JOINT VENTURE BETWEEN PUBLIC EDUCATION AND THE COMMUNITY
TO CREATE EXCELLENCE IN VOCATIONAL EDUCATION

WHAT IS A JOINT VENTURE?

This Joint Venture is designed to enhance significantly the education of students by building strong partnerships between public vocational programs and the private business and industrial sector.

WHY GET INVOLVED IN A JOINT VENTURE?

The quality of life in any community is largely the result of the quality of its educational programs. Today's vocational students are tomorrow's employees - tomorrow's community leaders. There is no greater investment that a community can make than the investment that it makes in its young people. Invest in them now!

* Help enrich the school curriculum.

* Help broaden knowledge of the community - its businesses, its industries.

* Help provide support and assistance to vocational educators.

WHO CAN PARTICIPATE IN A JOINT VENTURE?

Any business, industry or community agency that is willing to make a strong commitment to the school and its mission.

Any business, industry or community agency that believes in helping young people with their education and is willing to work cooperatively with the school to achieve this goal.

HOW WILL BUSINESS AND INDUSTRY BENEFIT?

* By having a prime opportunity to help educate future employees.

* By seeing young students develop into mature adult workers.

* By contributing directly to the quality of vocational education being provided within your own community.

* By obtaining supplemental skill training for your present employees.

* By enhancing your own public image.

WHAT CAN YOU OFFER?

* Training Expertise
* Cocperative Training Sites for Students
* Job Opportunities for Graduates
* Help with Program Evaluation
* Guest Speakers
* Role Models
* Assistance with Youth Club Activities
* Technical Assistance
* Tours
* Career Guidance for Students
* Incentive Awards
* Advise regarding Program Direction
* Updating Experiences for Vocational Teachers
* The list of possibilities for cooperation is endless.

WHAT VOCATIONAL PROGRAMS ARE SEEKING TO DEVELOP JOINT VENTURES?

* Health Occupations
* Vocational Advancement Program (VAP)
* Distributive Education
* Office Occupations
* Auto Mechanics
* General Metals
* Horticulture
* Diesel Mechanics
* Plumbing
* Welding
* Machine Shop
* Electricity/Electronics
* Cosmetology
* Commercial Art/Advertising
* AC/Refrigeration/Appl. Repair
* Building Trades
* Cabinetmaking
* Graphic Arts/Photography
* Auto Body Repair
* Special Disadvantaged

WHAT DO THESE VOCATIONAL PROGRAMS HAVE IN COMMON? - A BELIEF THAT

* Vocational programs will be kept most relevant and up-to-date when business and industry are able to provide continuous input.

* Business and industry employ the graduates of our vocational programs. Thus, it is essential that they have input into the nature and quality of training provided.

* The schools and their educational programs belong to the public. It is their tax dollars that provide support and make the education programs possible. Thus, it is only logical to involve local business and industry in the affairs of the school.

* Schools alone cannot carry out the task of educating youth. A partnership among business, industry, education and the general public is essential if we are to maximize vocational education opportunities.

* Vocational education is too important to be left solely in the hands of educators. Much expertise resides within the business and industrial community. Cooperative partnerships provide the only assurance that our vocational programs will remain accountable to students, businesses and industrial firms alike.

* Quality education is everybody's business.

HOW TO ESTABLISH A JOINT VENTURE?

1. Call _____ at _____ and indicate your interest in this program.

2. A member of the Joint Venture Liaison Committee will call and provide you with information about a vocational program which is desirous of developing a Joint Venture.

3. After selecting a specific program, you will begin planning with the vocational teacher and other Joint Venture personnel to build a strong, effective partnership that will be mutually beneficial to you and the school's program.

24. Help identify needed vocational instructor competencies.

25. Establish criteria for vocational program entrance and graduation.

26. Develop a student recruitment program.

27. Assist vocational school in beautifying its facility and grounds.

28. Help establish and print a student handbook or school newspaper/newsletter.

29. Help mobilize alumni support.

30. Assist in development of various promotional materials (brochures, video tapes, slides) highlighting vocational programs and opportunities.

31. Help promote vocational programs with community organizations.

32. Provide fund-raising expertise and assistance.

33. Increase student and staff involvement in youth activities/clubs.

34. Obtain commitment among entire school staff for training-related student job placement.

35. Sponsor outings, with training and recreation components, for students, their parents and friends.

36. Conduct classes for students at business sites.

37. Provide executives-on-loan to assist management operations.

Through the cumulative effect of such cooperative efforts, working partnerships can improve the educational process and provide enhanced visibility and recognition for valued public service.

A Joint Venture Between Public Education and the Community to Promote Excellence in Vocational Education

☆ COOPERATING AGENCIES ☆

- Local Business & Industry
- Public School Vocational Programs
- Community Agencies
- The University of Tennessee

POTENTIAL PROJECT ACTIVITIES AND OUTCOMES

We can not begin to tell you all the possible activities and outcomes of a working partnership, but here are a few...

1. Provide qualified entry level workers for business and industry.
2. Institute programmatic changes consistent with employer expectations to enhance student employability.
3. Increase contacts between vocational school administrators, instructors and local employers.
4. Provide part-time cooperative work experiences for students as a capstone learning event.
5. Provide internships, clinical and volunteer work experiences and worker shadowing opportunities.
6. Provide weekend, holiday and/or summer employment for students.
7. Assist vocational instructors and counselors with job placement and follow-up.
8. Assist students in establishing themselves as entrepreneurs.
9. Provide scholarships, tuition assistance or other support for outstanding graduates who wish to continue their vocational preparation.
10. Provide technical upgrading and updating for vocational instructors through personnel exchange programs, work experiences, participation in company training programs and attendance at seminars and/or workshops.
11. Obtain employer support for and assistance with craft advisory committees which help in updating and upgrading vocational programs, equipment and facilities on a routine basis.

12. Provide job readiness, career opportunity and work attitudes seminars, as well as other occupational orientation activities for students and/or instructors.
13. Provide guest speakers for school assemblies or individual vocational classes.
14. Provide volunteers, employees and recent retirees, who can contribute time and expertise in classroom and/or shop teaching, tutoring and performance testing.
15. Provide tours of local business/industry or other sites.
16. Provide voluntary staff and student labor on community projects.
17. Provide judges for vocational youth club competitive events and recognition for contest participants.
18. Honor vocational students' performance each grading period (vocational achievement awards).
19. Display students' work at local business/industry sites.
20. Recognize an outstanding vocational instructor each grading period.
21. Assist vocational instructors in obtaining supplies, materials and equipment needed to operate a quality program.
22. Provide mini-grants to vocational programs or schools.
23. Encourage partnership employees to tour vocational facilities.

APPENDIX C

DESCRIPTIVE INFORMATION ON SIMILAR PROJECTS

1. Pennsylvania Partnerships in Action

Purpose/Background

The major purpose of this program is to encourage public/private partnerships in education to provide an opportunity to bring the "outside world" into the classroom and to lead to more informed career choices for the students. Governor Thornburgh of Pennsylvania has been the main thrust behind this program. He called upon the schools to establish partnerships with business and industry and with other entities in the public and private sector so that their considerable resources could be brought together to bear in the overall process of improving education.

Partners

The prospective program partners include every one of the 501 public school districts and 84 area vocational-technical schools in the commonwealth along with business/industry and public/private sector organizations from each community.

Sponsors/Funding Sources

Sponsorship for the program is shared by the Governor's Private Sector Initiatives Task Force and the Pennsylvania Department of Education with cooperation from the State Chamber of Commerce, the Business Council of Pennsylvania and the State's Intermediate Units and Institutions of Higher Education. Overall direction for the project comes from the Commissioner for Basic Education in the Department of Education.

Accomplishments/Activities

Pennsylvania's Partnership Project was initiated through a statewide conference called by the Governor to introduce potential partners to the proposed program and to encourage their future participation. Subsequently, a survey was conducted to determine existing educational partnerships and to identify successful programs and practices which could serve as models. A brochure was prepared and widely distributed. It was designed to present the partnership concept and develop a general "awareness" by the public. This was followed by the publication of a "how-to" booklet. The booklet was the centerpiece in a training effort which prepared Department and Intermediate Unit staff as consultants to work with schools in initiating partnerships.

2. Programming for Community Involvement - Hampton Township School District, Newton, New Jersey

Purpose/Background

The program is designed to facilitate partnerships in education between local community groups and the school. The project would also like to achieve one of the educational goals of the school district: "Each child should acquire...a sense of civic responsibility." Students will become familiar with the role various civic and community groups play in the educational and social life of a school.

Partners

The program partners include local government agencies, health services, business associations, recreational groups, township citizens, parents and other local educational agencies all working with the local public school.

Sponsors/Funding Sources

The sponsor is the Hampton Township Board of Education. Funding consists primarily of donations from the private sector.

Accomplishments/Activities

Accomplishments to date include: Rotary and realtor affiliations; power company, bank and insurance agency affiliations; a senior citizens day, career day and recreational partnerships; cultural and educational activities; a child identification project; and facility sharing activities.

Future plans call for an expansion of business partnerships, and plans to disseminate this partnership program through the local media and other publications in order to share information with other school districts.

3. Southeastern Illinois Vocational System - A Unique Partnership

Purpose/Background

The partnership is designed to provide high quality, broad based vocational training for eleventh and twelfth grade student in rural southeastern Illinois. The program

has been in existence since the Fall of 1983.

Partners

The program partners include nine secondary schools, a regional vocational system, a community college, a prison and the business/industry of the region.

Sponsors/Funding Sources

The primary sponsors of the partnership are the Southeastern Illinois Regional Vocational System, Southeastern Illinois Community College, Vienna Correctional Center and the nine high schools of the region. Funding sources consist primarily of donations from the private sector.

Accomplishments/Activities

Accomplishments to date include:

1. Vocational program offerings have been increased dramatically. Every high school student currently has a choice of a minimum of twenty vocational programs. Before the Regional System, some students were limited to four program choices.

2. An inservice program has been implemented through extensive workshops, summer industry internship and involvement with professional organizations.

3. By increasing the number of vocational program options the percentage of students enrolling increased to approximately 80 percent of the total student body.

4. Facilities other than the ones in the high schools are being used more efficiently without duplication by contracting with the high schools during times when their facilities were not in use.

4. Volunteers in Public Schools - Houston Independent School District

Purpose/Background

The Houston Independent School District's Business/School Partnership Program involves business people in the schools preferably on a repeated and continuing basis. Each company that participates is matched with the school of its choice or a school that has expressed a need. Together, they tailor their program to the needs of the school and the available resources of the company.

Launched in 1980 with strong support from such companies as IBM, Bechtel, Tenneco and Shell, the Business/School Partnerships Program now includes over 100 established partnerships. Half of those involve business people going to the schools every week. Eventually, plans are to expand the program to every school in the District.

Sponsors/Funding Sources

Sponsors include the Houston Independent School District, business and industry, organizations/associations and the private sector in general. Funding primarily comes from the business/industry sector and participating organization/associations.

Partners

A number of businesses and organizations are involved in partnerships with the Houston Independent School District. They include: Gulf Oil, Texaco, Shell Oil, Channel 11, IBM, Lord and Taylor, United Gas Pipeline, and Sears.

Accomplishments/Activities

The Houston business community has been involved with the Houston Independent School District in a number of ways for over twelve years. Thousands of business volunteers have served and continue to serve as speakers, demonstrators, vocational advisors, etc. Activities include tutoring, adjunct-teacher, presentations, how-to-get-a-job skills, state-of-the-art advice, field trips, internships, shadowing, summer jobs, rewards for teachers and teaching managerial skills.

In 1980-81, 17 partnerships were established with vocational Magnet High Schools. In 1981-82, emphasis on Magnet Schools was continued and there were 42 partnerships. In 1982-83, there were 85 partnerships. In 1983-84, there were 178 connections involving 112 businesses and 98 schools. Nearly half the partnerships involve business volunteers on a regular weekly basis. A conservative estimate is that over a million dollars of man-hours or donations were given last year. Though donations often follow the presence of a business in a school, people rather than donations, are sought.

5. The Boston Compact

Purpose/Background

The Boston Compact is a series of agreements between the Boston School Department, members of the Boston business community, area colleges and universities, and the Boston trade unions. Its purpose is to improve the education, work preparation, employment opportunities and college prospects of students in Boston's public high schools. A distinctive feature of the Compact is it's clearly defined, numerical goals, which each member organization has agreed to deliver to meet its terms of the agreement. The Compact, however, is more than just a set of signed agreements. It is a philosophy of school change, a youth employment strategy and a vehicle for implementing both of these.

Partners

The first partners were the Boston business community and the schools. The University and trade unions were more recent additions to the Compact.

Sponsors/Funding Sources

Early support from the Edna McConnell Clark Foundation and the Boston Private Industry Council made the Boston Compact a success. Other sponsors include: the Tri-Lateral Council, a program of the University, business and public school associations which were ordered by the Federal Courts in the Boston desegregation case of 1972, the business community, a strong core planning group whose members knew and trusted each other and were able to engender confidence

in the Boston business community, and Robert Spillane, school superintendent. Funding primarily comes from the Boston school system. They formed a Compact office which is fully staffed and reports directly to the superintendent. The business community and the Edna McConnell Clark Foundation also provide funding.

Accomplishments/Activities

1. The formation of a Compact office with staff who report to the Superintendent, the hiring of career experience teachers by the Boston Private Industry council and the identification of compact liaisons (who eventually became development officers) in each high school.

2. The continual development of the Jobs Collaborative Program. The Jobs Collaborative Program is a career development and work experience program funded by the Edna McConnell Clark Foundation to prepare high school students for the work world and assist them in the transition from school to work.

3. Development of the Summer Jobs Program for undergraduates.

4. Assistance to high school graduates in securing permanent positions.